

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE UNITED STATES**

July 16, 2020

**Legislative Hearing to Receive Testimony on Native Youth Perspectives on Mental Health
and Wellness**

**Supplementary Testimony submitted on behalf of Chicago Ozeena in response to testimony
presented at the July 16, 2020 Hearing**

Chicago is an 18-year-old, Athabascan young adult. He currently resides at Rights of Passage after two months at Covenant House. He grew up traveling back and forth between Nome and Anchorage, Alaska. His parents separated when he was seven. At eight years old, he lived in Anchorage, at nine he lived in Nome, at 11 years old in Anchorage, and then back in Nome. His mother lived in Anchorage; father lived in Nome. He has two older siblings and two younger siblings. At 17 years old, he decided to live with friends and, currently, has no relationship with his siblings. He states there was "too much going on, life situations." Chicago reports that "Nome is a crazy town. You have to be careful of certain people." He dropped out of school during his senior year because "it was annoying and too hard." He is still in contact with both parents. He spoke with his father this morning and his mother two weeks ago. His mother currently lives in Fairbanks.

When Chicago turned 18, he moved out of Alaska. He lived in Chicago, New York City, London, and visited 19 states. He reports that Starbucks transferred him to various locations as a barista. He would like to leave Alaska again, but is waiting for the Pandemic to end.

When asked, Chicago reports alcohol and marijuana use for both parents. He states that his home life was "busy - did not like the feeling of home". He clarifies that he felt safe, but there were arguments and substance use.

Chicago is in his third month of employment at Walmart. His goal is to become CEO of Walmart as he enjoys the business industry and is happy with his job. He currently is in the maintenance department.

When asked about experience with mental health services in Alaska, Chicago reports that he received counseling through Southcentral Foundation from ages 10 to 14. He states that the services were for anger management due to home situations and school. Chicago reports "counseling was all right, but mom was always present, so it was hard to express myself." Chicago feels that counseling would have been more effective if it focused on him as a person and his mother was not present for the sessions.